THE Lions' Pride
OF SAINT LEO UNIVERSITY

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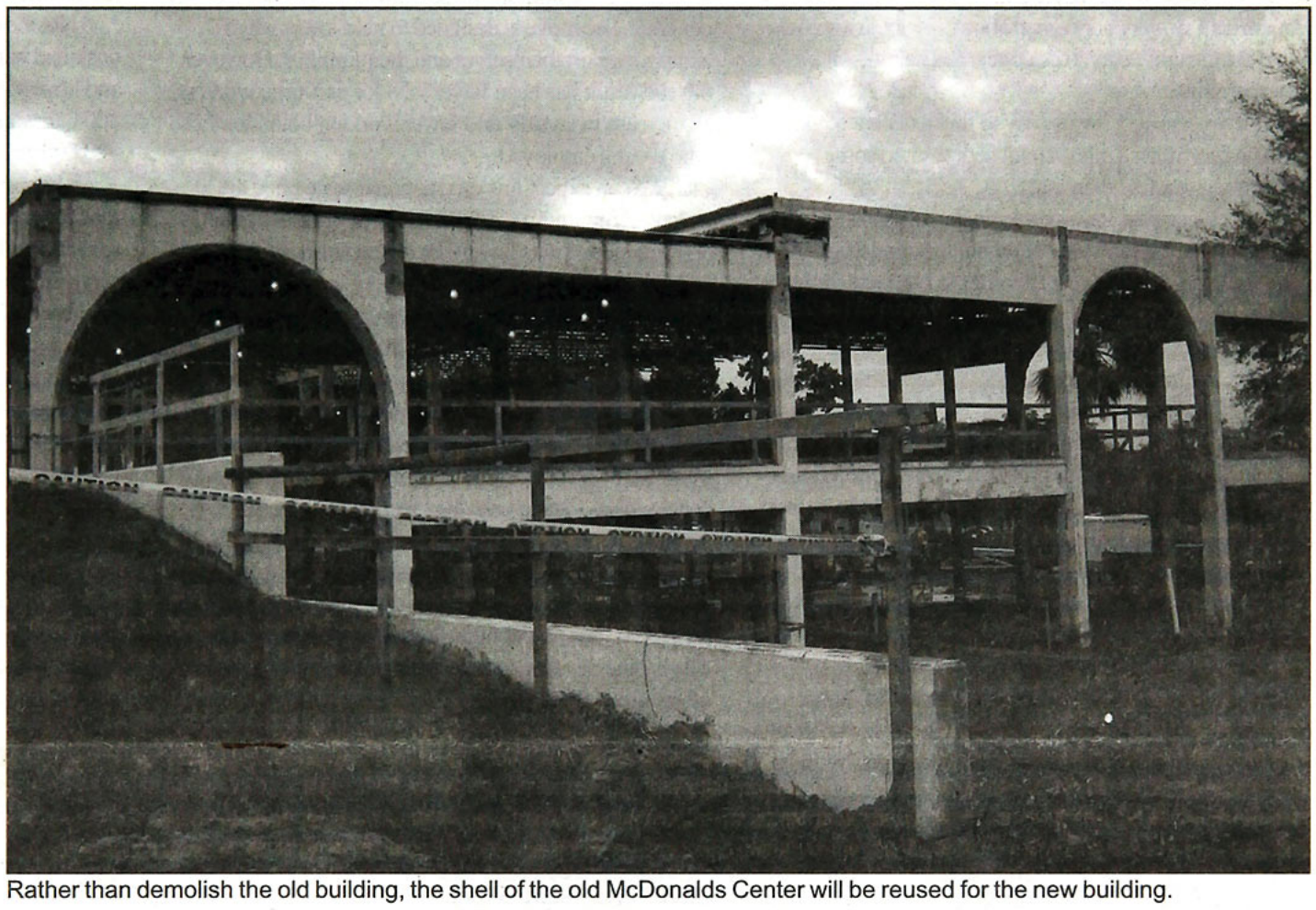
New student center: Well worth the wait

BY KRISTIN BRITTAIN
Lions' Pride Staff Writer


Rather than demolish the old building, the shell of the old McDonalds Center will be reused for the new building.

Heard throughout campus, many times before, Saint Leo is going through a time of change. Students were introduced to the plan, *Vision 2010,* many times before. Now, the familiar five part phase is well underway, beginning with the new Student Community Center.

As students look across campus, they see mounds of dirt, construction equipment that just does not seem to move, and workers sitting under the trees.

Many students complain, "I never see any work being done." Contradictorily to popular belief, the construction workers work from 7 a.m. to 3: 30 p.m. However, the first few months of work is mostly done in the ground. Laying piping and electrical equipment is the first, and a very crucial, step.

Phase one is the new Student Community Center, which is now currently under construction. The Community Center will be broken down into two separate buildings known now as A and B.

Building A is going to be the focal point, as people enter the campus. It will greet everyone with a 54 foot clock tower, in which the base will house a chapel that can comfortably seat 36 to 40 people. It will be approximately 15,103 square feet.

Saint Leo has decided rather than completely demolish the old McDonald Center, it will keep it. This is Building B. The school has decided to reuse the outermost shell of the exterior of the old building. Everything else will be brand new.

This saved the school $2 million, as well as cut the construction time by six months. Furthermore, 85 to 90 percent of the materials where recycled, thus creating minimal impact on the environment.

However, while trying to save time and money, a few unforeseen problems arose. This is the reason the opening of the Student Community Center is slightly delayed by 6 weeks.

"One of the components to this is because the roof off of the old McDonald Center had to be replaced due to the prevalent mold on the exterior of the roof," said Frank Mezzanini, vice president of business affairs, who is in charge of all of the construction on campus. Mezzanini said the expected date of the opening of the Community Center is now the middle to end of September of 2007.

Emphasizing one of Saint Leo's important core values of community, it is, however, well worth the wait.

The Student Community Center is very fitting of its name. It will be 41,730 square feet. It will house many different offices, including yearbook, the career center, student ministry, and many other student offices. It will bring together and create a collage of students and faculty members working together.

Adjacent to the clock tower and chapel will be the opening to the center. Connecting these two buildings will be a small circular outdoor lounge area. Students can walk across the lush landscape into Building A and take a breather where an open seating arrangement will be at the students' disposal.

"Students can come in, relax, have study groups, while overlooking the first floor," Mezzanini said.

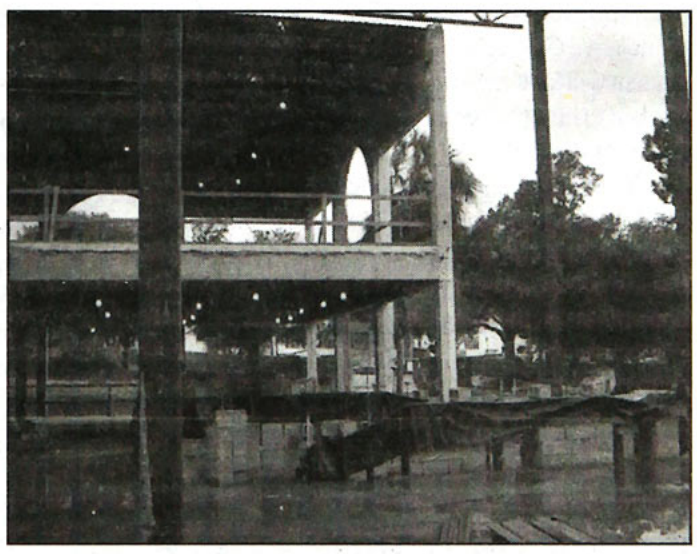
Also located at the walk-in level will be a 16,000 square foot convenience store where The Cage will be relocated "with a 7-11 feel." Following this will be the new Saint Leo Bookstore.

Leading down to the floor below will be a grand staircase, which will bring students to the dining hall.

"It is not a cafeteria. That has an image of high school," Mezzanini said. "This is going to be a gorgeous dining hall."

It will include three food stations, a Mongolian walk, and salad bar. The dining hall will include fixed seating, which will be less flexible pertaining to seating arrangements, but the upstairs will contain three large conference rooms that can open up into one big one, which will counteract the overflow if needed.

It will be very spacious and open with a lot of light because it can open to the outside, and it is closed in with glass, which will provide a beautiful view of the bowl and Lake Jovita.



All glass enclosure windows used in the Student Community Center are hurricane proof; they can withstand winds up to 140 miles per hour. Saint Leo upgraded, so if needed, the Center can also serve as an impromptu hurricane shelter.

The overall style of the buildings will be Spanish Mission, fitting in with the rest of the school.

"It is going to be gorgeous," exclaimed Mezzanini, "a dramatic change." The center will also hold a state-of-the-art theater with a seating capacity of 225 students, the Grind coffeehouse, and much more. The construction will cost $17.5 million to complete.

Thankfully, the delay of the Student Community Center will not affect any future construction plans on campus. According to Mezzanini "the students will come back to some disruption in 2007 fall semester," but the outcome is worth a little hassle.

Next on the construction agenda is the remodeling of the front road, beginning from St. Edwards Hall to the Marmiom Bowman Center. This part of the construction phase will cost $3.7 million.

Some of the utility work has already started. The next step will be to replace all of the light poles, which will begin around the middle of March and should be done before graduation. After that, the major work of removing and replacing the road will start.

"I think they are containing it rather well, but sometimes it just gets annoying with the noise levels and everything. But, I am really excited for it to be finished," said freshman Chelsea Shoemaker.

However students may feel about the current construction taking place around campus, these little inconveniences will be nothing compared to the beauty that will grace our campus. The Student Community Center will be more than just buildings or a place to grab a bite to eat; it will exemplify the core values of Saint Leo, where students are more then just that. It will definitely be the place to be, and it will be well worth the wait.

Opinions

Grade inflation: Earning grades more important than GPA

STAFF EDITORIAL
Daily Collegian (Penn State)

(U-WIRE) UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa. — Grade inflation, which the Pennsylvania State University English department is "very concerned about," is not just something for the university to be concerned about — it's a national issue.

Fifty years ago, it was easy to find a decent paying job with no more than a high school degree or, in some instances, even less than that.

The focus then became earning a college degree in order to find a "good" job. Now, students must earn more than undergraduate degrees in order to compete for high-paying jobs.

The increasing requirements have been forcing students to earn higher and higher GPAs in order to get accepted into advanced programs. However, what could have been an encouragement to students to work harder has morphed into a serious problem — grade inflation.

The problem runs deeper than college; some elementary school teachers will inflate grades to aid students in getting into good prep and high schools, and some of the teachers in those high schools will inflate grades to get their students into premier colleges.

There is a fine line between professors helping students and professors ruining the standard of higher education, and it has been crossed. Sure it may be great to see an 'A' at the end of the semester when you've only done minimal work, but are you really learning anything?

It's no wonder that multiple degrees are required to get a decent job when every diploma and degree has less and less actual education behind it.

However, when grade inflation occurs, a student's cumulative GPA could look great on paper, but that same student will look terribly foolish when he or she can't explain to his or her employer why they don't know the basics of the trade.

The Daily Collegian reported that between 1995 and 2005, the average semester GPA college-wide rose 5 percent, to 3.07 from 2.93.

While a .14 point difference might not seem like a big jump, the fact that the average increased steadily each year shows that this is not a fluke. It's a trend, one that is increasing the difficulty of finding employment.

It might sound crazy, but students, please insist on being given the grade you've earned — not just the one you want. And professors, hold your grading scale to a higher standard.

Otherwise, you lose the respect of your students, who miss out on the education you're getting paid to give to them.

Minimum wage hike will hurt worker, small business

BY JOSHUA M. SMITH
Lions' Pride Staff Writer

On February 10, *The Arizona Republic* reported the state's new minimum wage law has cost many teen workers their jobs after Arizona lawmakers recently increased the minimum wage from $5.15 per hour to $6.75 per hour. The move is designed to help lower wage earners support themselves and their families. However, the end result has been fewer jobs for part-time workers, an increase in layoffs, and fewer working hours for those who are still employed.

We can expect this on a national scale once the proposed minimum wage hike to $7.25 passes the Senate and gets signed in to law by President Bush. With this law—and others—lawmakers have focused on the instant gratification of higher wages without considering the far-reaching ramifications of such artificial manipulation of the free market.

What happens when the minimum wage goes up? Well, the few unskilled workers who actually earn the minimum wage instantly see an increase in their pay checks. That's stage one: the "feel good" part. After the euphoria subsides, the reality of stage two sets in. Due to increased payroll costs, small businesses often cannot afford to hire new workers. Several businesses resort to laying workers off or cutting hours for their part-time help. The businesses that do keep their existing staff levels are often forced to raise prices.

So, who wins when lawmakers increase the minimum wage? It's not skilled workers; they typically already make more than minimum wage. It's not teenagers working in movie theaters; DVD rentals and movie downloads are already sapping profitability from theaters. Small businesses definitely don't win; they are already struggling to stay afloat in a sea of "big box" retailers like Wal-Mart.

No, the only winners seem to be the tiny number of unskilled workers who actually work minimum wage jobs and have somehow never managed to earn a raise. In 2004, that amounted to 0.4 percent of all workers, or 520,000 out of a labor market of 130 million.

The rest of us pay the price. We pay the price in lost jobs for teen and college-aged workers, fewer hours for teen and college-aged workers, higher prices for goods and services, and, in too many cases, fewer restaurants and retailers to choose from as small businesses fold.

There is, however, one group of people who come out of a minimum wage hike as winners: the Democrat and Republican lawmakers who pass this sort of irresponsible legislation. Politicians come out looking like champions of the working man despite the real effects of their economic meddling.

When you start paying more for a hamburger or a theater ticket, when your younger siblings and friends are unable to find part-time jobs, just remember who to thank. Be sure to thoroughly enjoy that overpriced burger or movie; Lord knows, enough people lost their jobs and businesses to give it to you.

Tornado victims need help

BY JASON HOWARD
Lions' Pride Staff Writer

Hundreds of residents living in North Central Florida were shaken from their beds early in the morning on February 1 by the most destructive pair of tornado's to hit the state in more than ten years.

"It's like a bomb went off in central Florida," said newly elected Florida Governor Charlie Crist as he flew over the area in a military Blackhawk helicopter. One tornado touched down around 3:15 Friday morning in Citrus County, quickly moving East into Sumter and Lake Counties – destroying everything in its path. The second tornado struck Deland about 8 minutes later, according to the National Weather Service.

The only loss of life came from Lake County, just north of Orlando. Of the 19 people confirmed to have been killed by these powerful storms, 13 came from the rural area around Lake Mack and Paisley, Lake County emergency officials said. Among the dead were two high school students, a 17-year-old girl and a boy, one of triplets, killed along with his parents, while his sister, also one of the triplets, is in serious condition. There are also reports that a 7-year-old boy and his father were killed. Some of the dead were found 300 feet from their homes, said a man who participated in the rescue.

In response to his first natural disaster since taking office, Governor Charlie Crist declared a state of emergency in Lake, Seminole, Sumter, and Volusia counties.

More than 20,000 homes and businesses lost electricity, and hundreds of homes, many of them mobile homes, suffered some damage.

"It looked like a bomb went off on some of these homes, and it breaks your heart to see that," Crist told reporters. Standing just beside Crist at a news conference, Senator Bill Nelson spoke of the damage he saw from a helicopter.

"It looks like a total war zone about 300 yards wide, about three football fields," he said.

This incident hits home with many Saint Leo University students.

"I really want to go up there and help. It's horrible what happened to those people and if I were in there position I wouldn't know what to do," said sophomore Derek Molina.

Hearing of this incident may remind many of the hurricanes that came through the area during the 2004-2005 school year.

"I was just a freshman when the hurricanes hit near here and I was terrified, said one student. "I can't imagine what the people who are dealing with this must be feeling. Being from New York, the only thing I'm used to is a blizzard. Those are bad, but these storms ruin everything they touch."

If any Saint Leo University students are interested in helping these families, there are several programs available. Every weekend, a group of students drives to the sites and assists with the clean up efforts. For more information, contact jason.howard@saintleo.edu.

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FAFSA decoded

BY JESSICA SWANSON
Lions' Pride Staff Writer

March 15, 2007 is fast approaching, and every student who wants financial aid should mark March 15 on his or her calendar.

Recently, conferences for assistance with financial aid were held on campus. The dates for the conferences were January7 and January 23. These conferences were designed for the parents of high school students who hope to attend Saint Leo, as well as transfer students, although all were invited to attend. Many topics were covered.

One topic was the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, commonly known as FAFSA. This is a series of forms that a student who wishes to receive financial aid while attending Saint Leo University (among many other colleges) must fill out. Students may fill out the forms via mail or on the web at *http://www.fafsa.ed.gov*.

More often than not, students and parents prefer filling out the FAFSA online because it is easier to do so. The website for Federal Student Aid, *http://studentaid.ed.gov*, boasts, "when you apply online, you don't hassle with paperwork, and you get your results faster. Plus, help filling out your FAFSA is built into the system, so you'll know what to do as you go along."

In addition to offering help with filling out the FAFSA, the website offers a list of documents students need to have in their possession before filling out the information on the web. Most of the documents require little effort to retrieve, such as the previous year's tax returns.

Also, if a student needs help filling out the FAFSA, a document called the "FAFSA on the Web Worksheet" is available for download. This worksheet is a practice FAFSA that lists all of the questions in order that can be found in the actual FAFSA, so students can get use to the format or have time to gather all of the information needed.

Another positive to filling out the FAFSA online is that students and parents are able to save current information online and retrieve it later. That way, a student can begin filling out the FAFSA, save it, go about doing other things, and then return to it later. Once this information is saved online, it is secured with a government issued PIN number. Each PIN is individual and cannot be used by any other individual. This PIN can be used to access the saved FAFSA form or to renew the FAFSA for the upcoming school year.

March 15 is the deadline for the 2007-2008 FAFSA. To maximize the chances of receiving any type of financial aid, students need to have the FAFSA completed on or before March 15, 2007. Students need to pay close attention to the deadline. Otherwise, they will end up missing out on a number of financial opportunities. Saint Leo will not award any type of scholarship unless students have filled out and submitted a FAFSA.

Large class size poses challenge for commencement ceremoney

BY JOSHUA M. SMITH
Lions' Pride Staff Writer

In a bustling office on the first floor of Saint Edward Hall, in the midst of a flurry of phone calls and paperwork, employees of Saint Leo's registrar's office and their student worker assistants tirelessly prepare for the University's largest commencement ceremony ever.

"The graduating class gets bigger every year," said Registrar Karen Hatfield, whose office has to kick into overdrive each year to keep up with the mailings, deadlines, communications, and incoming questions associated with commencement.

"As the University grows, the commencement ceremony grows with it," said Hatfield.

As such, the employees of the registrar's office find themselves with more work each year at this time than they did the year before. As of this writing, there are a total of 743 students graduating this May.

As in recent years, commencement will be divided into two separate ceremonies. Campus students, weekend and evening students, and continuing education students will march from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Center for Online Learning students and graduate students will march from 5 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Both commencement ceremonies will take place on Saturday, May 5, 2007.

The administration considered adding a Friday night ceremony to accommodate the large number of graduates but decided against it due to the disruption the move would have caused. However, next year's ceremonies most likely will have to be held over two nights in order to make room for the graduating class of 2008, anticipated to be even larger than this year's class.

Graduates should have already received one informational letter dated January 29, 2007 with information regarding admission tickets. Also in this communication, students were advised the commencement ceremonies can be viewed via streaming video and audio on the Internet at http://iteach.saintleo.edu.

Many graduates still have tasks to complete prior to the ceremony. Academic regalia should be purchased from Herff Jones as soon as possible. This can be done online at http://www.herffjones.com or by contacting the bookstore at bkstore@saintleo.edu. A Herff Jones representative will be on campus at the bookstore on March 14 and 15 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Also, graduating students must be financially clear to be eligible to participate in commencement.

Students can expect two more informational mailings from the registrar's office as the spring semester unfolds. One will be sent out on March 1 and another on April 1.

Students can get the latest information regarding commencement on the Saint Leo website home page under "News and Events."

International Tourism Club

BY SIMONE WILLIAMS
Lions' Pride Staff Writer

All international tourism majors and those interested in international affairs should turn their attention to a promising and relatively new club called the International Tourism Club, ITC.

The members of ITC are constantly trying to find ways to increase awareness of the importance of tourism to the world's economy, as well as encourage interest in international customs and affairs. The International Tourism Club was established two years ago. It began with only ten members, including the advisor, Dr. Stan McGahey. As of Tuesday, January 16, ITC has a total of 15 official members.

Shari Oliver, president of ITC and RA for third floor Snyder, encouraged her entire floor to go to the meeting. The girls expected about a dozen students discussing classes they had and various homework assignments. But, ITC is nothing like that. This semester, Oliver is really focused on expanding the club.

"2007 is ITC's year to shine. We definitely want to incorporate the entire University in our activities. We have big plans in store," she said.

The club is working on several projects this semester in order to gain popularity and raise money for charities. One such project will be held a few weeks before Spring Break. The club is planning to put up a Spring Break information booth between Lewis and Crawford Halls the first week of March.

"Sometimes, a bad decision can have lasting effects," said McGahey. In light of this, the club would like to focus its efforts

Shari Oliver

in helping to reduce poor decisions made during Spring Break. ITC wants to provide students with valuable information. This information will come in the form of pamphlets, flyers, and posters.

Because of terrorist activities, there has been an increase in homeland security, and traveling has become increasingly difficult. To help lower the stress of travel, ITC is going to give out pertinent information at the Spring Break booth, such as how to get a passport, what to do and not to do on vacation, and general financial tips. With this project, McGahey hopes to help students "enjoy a safe, carefree, and affordable vacation."

That same week, ITC will have a bake sale. Because the club wants to encourage international customs, all the desserts sold will be pastries made with recipes from different countries. Recipes are not limited only to the ones given by ITC members. The club is actually encouraging students and faculty members to submit recipes of their own.

Another project ITC is working on is collaborative with the freshman Student Government Union. There is no definite plan, yet. The overall goal of the project is to raise money for Invisible Children, Inc.

"After being made aware of the amazing efforts of Invisible Children Inc., I see it as incumbent on the ITC organization to assist in any way possible," said Oliver.

For those who haven't watched the movie, there is an official website with important information. Check out http://www.invisiblechildren.com/ for more information.

International Tourism Club meetings are held every Tuesday at 6 p.m. in the third floor lounge of Apartment 3.

"If anyone is interested, they're more than welcome to attend," saidOliver with a smile. She can be contacted at shari.oliver@saintleo.edu

Academic Excellence Day

Thursday, April 19, 2007

A day set aside for the celebration of student achievement.

Spring semester brings motivation for freshmen

BY KATIE GAISER
Lions' Pride Staff Writer

After having nearly a month off from school, the transition from all fun to all work can be somewhat challenging and stressful, especially to Saint Leo's finest first year students. But, it's time again to put down those drinks and pick up a textbook, and as freshmen reflect on this past semester, perhaps their discoveries and experiences will offer them a new source of motivation.

The fall semester of 2006 was jam packed with various activities and events, everything from parties at the Tiki Hut to a trip to the Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center. The many highs and lows of '06 gave students their own taste of what college is really about.

Many freshmen highs included meeting new people and finding a newfound sense of freedom and independence. The lows were nearly unanimous, having to do with being away from home for the first time.

"It's hard at first," freshman Kristen Weeks said. "Being on your own for the first time really tests you to see what you can stand up to."

Lizzie Seedhouse, an RA residing on the third floor of Snyder, agrees that freshmen have a hard time adjusting.

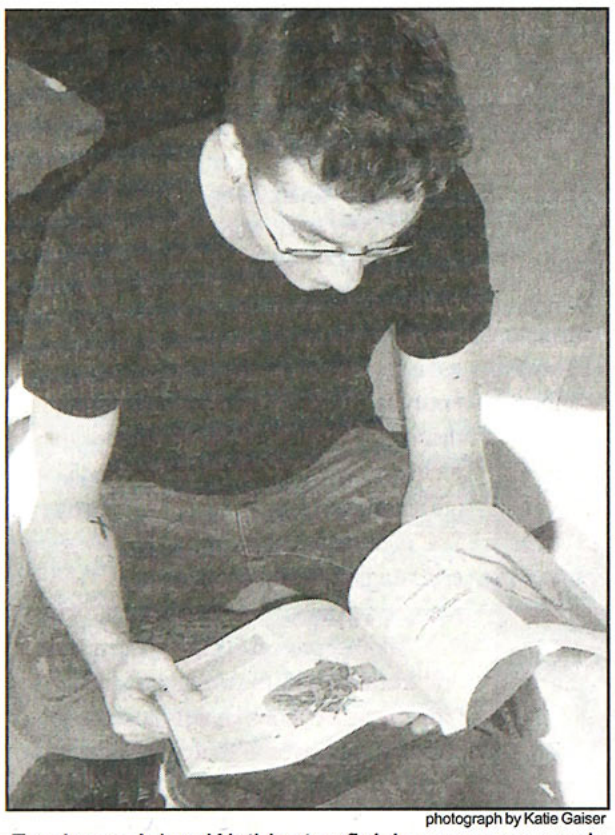
"It's hard at first for them to adjust because a lot of kids aren't used to doing things for themselves," she said. "Some don't know how to do laundry; others have problems with time management skills."

Seedhouse said homesickness can be a hard thing to cope with.

"It doesn't matter where the student is from, whether it be across the country or 30 minutes away," she said. "Anyone who gets out of their routine from seeing their parents and siblings each day is going to have a tough time at first."

While the transition has been difficult for some, students can agree they've had their share of memorable experiences.

"The first night we moved into the building, I was sitting in my room anxious and unsure if I was going to like being at this school," said freshman Cherokee King. "All of a sudden, I smelled something burning coming from the hallway. I walked outside my room, and sure enough, the girls across the hall had burnt a bag of popcorn. All we could do was laugh and make fun of the situation," she stated with a smile. "It was from that night on I knew I could stay here and do this."



photograph by Katie Gaiser
Freshmen Cherokee King, Casey Foster, and Kristen Weeks enjoy each other's company as they study for an upcoming exam.

Freshman Casey Foster also has memories this past semester.

"One Friday before break, my friends and I went out to the hookah lounge for a friend's birthday," she said. "Just being with everyone in such a peaceful atmosphere. Talking and listening to music really made the night something I'll never forget."

Each freshman can relate to times like these that will resonate among him or her forever. However, they simply cannot forget some of the struggles they faced in the world of academia.

photograph by Katie Gaiser
Freshman Adam Wethington finishes up some work before he takes a night out on the town.

The jump from high school to college can be a scary and overwhelming process. Freshmen don't know what to expect or what is expected of them. For this reason, many first-time college students struggle with things like time management. Trying to find the balance between meeting new people and sitting down to study can be a difficult process to take on.

Freshman Adam Wethington can relate to this problem. As a first-time college student, he wasn't sure what to expect.

"I didn't anticipate how hard it was going to be," he said. "I quickly realized I wasn't in high school anymore."

Wethington went on to say he had a lot of trouble prioritizing.

"I believe in living in the moment," he said. "Sometimes, I don't think about what should come first."

The beginning of the second semester brings some much needed motivation for freshmen. Many have set goals for improvement regarding an assortment of things, including academics, social activities, and sports.

"I hope to find more time to study and still meet new people," Weeks said.

Wethington also has set his goals for this semester.

"I want to better manage my time and deal with my responsibilities above all else," he said. "I also want to think of myself first and take control of my life in a positive way."

One of the most difficult habits to overcome is procrastination. Students put things off for so long that very seldom anything gets done. Those who are aware of this problem have the most hope of overcoming it.

"I just don't want to procrastinate anymore," King said. "It's a big change I have to make if I want to improve my grades."

When it comes down to it, all students can do is learn from their mistakes and take more time to plan their schedules. Things like making charts or keeping a calendar can help students follow their agenda more effectively. Students can also use study groups and get help at the Learning Resource Center to better understand their material. There are many options available at Saint Leo to aid students in their academic achievement. Effectively managing time and taking advantage of the resources available will allow students to succeed not only in their social lives but academic lives as well.

For safety's sake during Spring Break

BY MEGAN BONNER
Lions' Pride Staff Writer

With Spring Break right around the corner, many students will be heading to the beach for some fun in the sun. There are a few tips to keep in mind to make sure everyone one has the best time he or she can, while staying safe at the same time.

- Always carry your ID. Clubs do check ID's…forget yours and you can forget getting in.
- Keep a brochure for your hotel with you in case you get drunk or lost and need help getting back.
- Think before you drink! According to the University of Wisconsin study, 75 percent of college males and 43.6 percent of females reported being intoxicated on a daily basis during spring break. Nearly half of the males and more than 40 percent of the females also reported being drunk to the point of vomiting or passing out at least once during break. This is the kind of binge drinking that is the major cause in alcohol poisoning. It also increases the risk of sexual assault, car accidents, and arrests for such violations as drunk driving, public intoxication, and property destruction.
- Never drink on an empty stomach. Set a limit of how many drinks you will have and alternate between alcoholic and nonalcoholic drinks.
- While in your hotel, keep the door locked at all times. Always look through the peephole before answering the door and never open it for a stranger.
- Use the buddy system whenever going out. Never leave a friend alone or let him or her go off with a stranger. Trust your instincts. If something does not feel right, leave!
- Do not sit or climb on balconies.
- Do not accept drinks from strangers.
- While out in the sun, avoid exposure during the hottest hours of the sun's rays. Wear a sunscreen with a SPF of at least 15. Re-apply sunscreen frequently.

- Always swim by a lifeguard. Know about rip currents. If you should get caught in one, swim parallel to shore until clear of the current.
- Don't carry around large amounts of cash.
- Make sure your parents know how to reach you, and give someone you trust an itinerary incase of emergency.

Lions' Pride interview with U. S. Congresswomen Ginny Brown-Waite

BY JOSHUA M. SMITH
Lions' Pride Staff Writer

As the Democrat-controlled 110th Congress gets underway, issues such as the federal minimum wage, student loan interest rates, and the war in Iraq are at the forefront of the legislative schedule. *The Lions' Pride* recently had the opportunity to interview U.S. Representative Ginny Brown-Waite, a Republican who represents Florida's 5th district (which includes Saint Leo University), about the Democrats' "First 100 Hours" agenda, bipartisanship in Washington, and other issues facing Congress.

***Lion's Pride*: Congresswoman Brown-Waite, congratulations on your reelection last fall. Thanks for taking the time to answer a few questions regarding the new Congress. You recently voted in favor of the College Student Relief Act. What does this act do, and how do you expect it to help Florida college students?**

U.S. Congresswoman Ginny Brown-Waite: Florida students have access to some of the best post-secondary education in the nation. Unfortunately, many families and individuals cannot afford the full cost of college and need to apply for federal education loans and grants. Congress should promote higher education by helping make college affordable. The College Student Relief Act is designed to lower the interest rates that some students pay on their student loans. This Act is a positive first step to help more students afford the rising costs of a college education. Looking proactively, I would like to see Congress reduce the interest rate on all federal education loans and grants. Congress must also increase the cap on the amount of loans you can accept through the Stafford and Pell grant programs. Giving more for student loans, while at the same time lowering interest rates, allows more students to get a college degree.

***LP*: You recently voted in favor of a bill allowing federal funding for embryonic stem cell research. There is concern among pro-life Americans that such research will be done in a manner that harms a living human embryo. A presidential veto notwithstanding, this bill could have tax dollars paid by pro-life Americans going toward the destruction of viable embryos. In your opinion, how do the benefits of such research outweigh the ethical concerns?**

GBW: Embryonic stem cells are derived from in vitro fertilized (IVF) embryos in excess of those needed to treat infertile couples trying to have children. Many believe that embryonic stem cells have the potential to save millions of lives by treating and curing diseases such as cancer, Parkinson's, heart disease, and multiple sclerosis.

As a mother and a grandparent, I cannot ignore the possibility that this research could cure our children of some of the most horrendous and deadly diseases. I have heard from constituents, many of them parents who have had trouble getting pregnant and turned to in vitro fertilization for help. As with most in vitro fertilization procedures, several embryos are left over after the procedure. After a successful in vitro procedure, many families decide not to have any more children and would like to donate their embryos to save the lives of those with debilitating diseases.

However, the Administration's current policy limits federal research funding to embryonic stem cells that were derived by August 9, 2001. Only 22 of those embryonic stem cell lines are available, and the majority of these lines have been contaminated, making their therapeutic use for humans uncertain. Any additional lines created after 2001 are not eligible for federal funding, even though they may provide more accurate and reliable research than the existing, contaminated 22 lines.

Because of my strong commitment to life, I voted in favor of H.R. 3, the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act of 2007. I specifically supported H.R. 3 because it adds moral and ethical regulations that are today only optional for the bio-medical industry. Embryos used to derive stem cells will have to be originally created for fertility treatment purposes. Embryos must be in excess of clinical need and would have been discarded because the donors have chosen not to give them up for adoption. The donors additionally must provide explicit consent for donation of the embryos and may not receive any compensation in return.

Congresswoman Ginny Brown-Waite

If a couple decides against adoption, then these embryos are too important to be discarded without helping mankind.

***LP*: You recently voted with Democrats (and 82 Republicans) to raise the federal minimum wage to $7.25. What impact do you believe this increase will have on Florida workers and small businesses?**

GBW: Since the vast majority of minimum wage workers are between the ages of 18 and 24, I can understand why this issue is important to St. Leo students! Floridians already voted in favor of increasing minimum wage above the $5.15 federal minimum during the 2004 elections. That means neighboring states may have a lower minimum wage, and I worried this discrepancy would put Florida business owners at a competitive disadvantage. This is the main reason I voted in favor of increasing the federal minimum wage. However, I hope that Congress also provides tax incentives to small business owners who may be forced to lay off workers because of the increased salary costs. This will allow more of the minimum wage workers to keep their jobs and provide for their futures.

***LP*: You recently voted to implement the remaining 9/11 Commission recommendations. How will these recommendations keep Americans safer, and why were they not passed before now?**

GBW: No issue is more important to me than protecting our nation from enemies. In fact, that is part of the oath I take when I am sworn in to Congress. The 9/11 Commission presented many recommendations on how to improve our nation's security. While Republicans and President Bush were able to implement virtually all of them within the first year following the report, several were extremely complicated and warranted further examination. For instance, one recommendation was to change the formula by which grant money is allocated to states to prevent terrorism. House Republicans proposed a change that would give more money to states with international or ocean borders. Unfortunately, several Senators who would receive less money under this change refused to let it proceed, and the same roadblock is likely to tie up the new version of this proposal as well. Changing the grant formula would be a great help to states like Florida, where the additional money could help protect critical infrastructure like ports and chemical plants, rather than going to a state like Montana with a small likelihood of terrorist interest. Additionally, the bill the new majority presented to the House did not include every 9/11 Commission recommendation either. The new House leadership decided not to implement several changes, such as giving the House and Senate Committees greater jurisdiction over homeland security issues and the intelligence budget. I look forward to continuing my service on the Homeland Security Committee and doing what I can to make our country safer and more secure.

***LP*: During the Democratic response to President Bush's State of the Union Address, Senator Jim Webb suggested Democrats had "established a tone of cooperation and consensus that extends beyond party lines." Since Democrats did not allow Republicans to offer amendments to their "100 Hours" agenda items, do you believe Democrats have truly affected a change in tone in Washington?**

GBW: Like my father always said, "Words without follow though are nothing but empty promises." Throughout their campaign, Democrats complained that bipartisanship was dead and that they never had an opportunity to affect legislation. Apparently, the more things change, the more they stay the same. We are now a month into the 110th Congress and none of the Democrat-sponsored legislation has gone through the committee hearing process or been open to amendment, nor have Democrats allowed Republican input. I was willing to give the Democrats a chance during their 100 Hour plan, but if they do not change their ways soon, I can't help but feel their promises of bipartisanship are hollow and their claims to have improved the tone in Washington nothing more than partisan rhetoric.

***LP*: President Bush asked Congress to support his new Iraq strategy to send 21,500 troops to Baghdad and Anbar province. Do you support this temporary increase, or do you consider it an escalation of the conflict?**

GBW: America must bring the fight to the enemy if we are to be successful in fighting the Islamic extremists and terrorists bent on destroying America. Congress must do everything in its power to ensure that America fights our battles in places like Afghanistan and Iraq, not here in the United States. Our troops also deserve the funding and support necessary to complete their mission. I will not vote to cut funding for our brave men and women serving in harms way and even cosponsored a House Resolution declaring that promise.

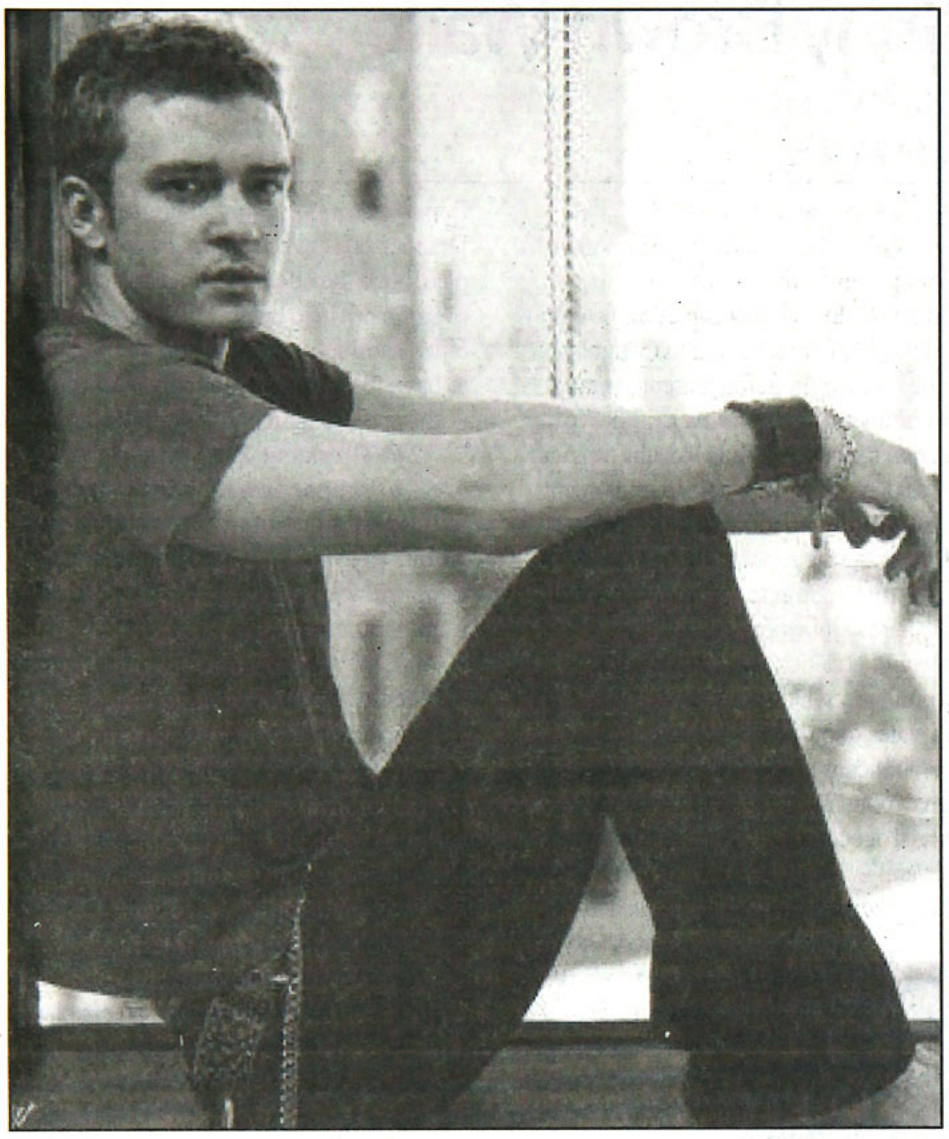
Also in the President's speech was the outline for what he hopes to accomplish with a surge in troop strength in the Baghdad region of Iraq. As the Commander-In-Chief of the United States Military, the President has wide discretion in how he chooses to deploy our troops. However, in this case his policy is misguided and only serves to put more of our troops in danger, without a clear plan for success. Relying on unproven Iraqi troops and an Iraqi Prime Minister who has yet to stand up to the terrorist insurgents is a recipe for disaster. The United States government must put renewed pressure on the Iraqis to step up to the plate and take responsibility for the future of their nation. If not, I am fully prepared to support a cut off of U.S. funding of reconstruction efforts in Iraq.

***LP*: Now that the Democrats control both the House and Senate, bipartisanship will be a necessity in order to pass legislation. What issues do you believe both sides can come together on, and what initiatives will you personally be working on with your colleagues on either side of the aisle during the next two years?**

GBW: The American people made it clear that politics as usual is over. They want results and they don't care which side gets it done. Throughout my elected career I have treated Democrats I serve with as I would like to be treated: with respect. I tell my staff all the time that Republicans don't have all the good ideas and that we need to work with anyone who presents a positive agenda for the nation.

In the 110th Congress, I have already started working with Florida Reps. Ron Klein and Tim Mahoney to pass a national catastrophic fund to deal with the homeowner's insurance crisis. Modeled after the Florida Cat Fund, our national cat fund will help reduce premiums and keep insurers from dropping homeowner's insurance policies. I will also be working to raise the Pell Grant and Stafford Loan limits for college students. I would hope that as the year progresses we can see some real action on the priorities of America.

Arts & Entertainment



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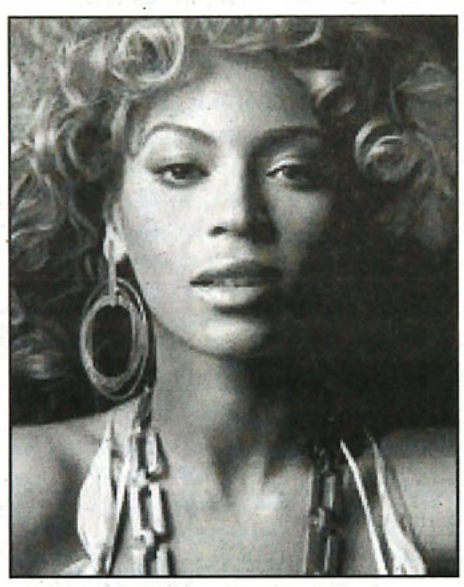

Clockwise: Justin "JT" Timberlake, pop icon; My Chemical Romance is gathering more fame with their hit song "Welcome to the Black Parade"; Beyonce Knowles, former Destiny's Child member; Stacy Ann "Fergie" Ferguson sets a new standard for the pop generation with her singles, "London Bridge" and "Fergalicious."

This Year's Best Music Heard 'Round The World

BY ASHLEE MASULLO
Lions' Pride Staff Writer

With the dawning of a new year, comes new, and perhaps, slightly overrated musical trends.

"I think the music industry is growing rapidly, there are so many different kinds and people are always coming up with something new. I think the music industry is just going to keep growing," stated Brianna Discordia, a freshman.

The music industry has changed a lot over the decades. Now, newer and unique bands are blossoming. Bands like Coheed & Cambria display unique and talented vocal and musical abilities. They have an album coming out in the spring/summer of this year, and are drawing more and more fans to their rock circle. Their debut hit single, "A Favor House Atlantic," was spotted at number 13 on Billboard's charts for Modern Rock Tracks.

There are fans who have wanted rock to become a more popular genre, and everyone has an opinion about what will popular this year.

"Probably rap again. But, I'd like rock to make a comeback as most popular music," said freshman, Matt Hanzel

With bands like Coheed & Cambria, Avenged Sevenfold, and System of A Down, it's hard to say why they wouldn't. Music genres are always making a comeback.

However, Amera Edwards had a differing opinion.

"I think the new Beyoncé, 'Upgrade U,' is off the charts and Justin Timberlake, Fergie, and Janet Jackson have been rolling in the cash."

Musical artists, such as Justin Timberlake, have reached number one on several of Billboard's charts, with his unique R&B/pop songs, "Sexy Back" and "My Love." Thus, he's created a new mix that fans across the world have enjoyed since. His music is heard frequently on radios and television, making him a media and pop icon.

After separating herself from the Black Eyed Peas, Fergie's debut singles, "London Bridge" and "Fergalicious," have set a new standard for the pop generation. Her single, "London Bridge," hit number one on Billboard's Pop 100 charts, with "Fergalicious," also setting a new online record, selling over 295,000 copies.

Battling it out on the charts with her is Beyoncé Knowles, former Destiny's Child leader. Her albums *B'Day* and *Dangerously In Love*, both hit number one on The Billboard 200 chart and Top R&B/Hip-Hop albums. Her newest single, "Irreplaceable," sat at number one on many charts, including Hot Digital Songs, Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs, Pop 100, and The Billboard Hot 100, for many weeks. It's still rising up a storm.

"This is going to be another big year for rap and the newer bands like Panic! at the Disco," exclaimed freshman Jessica Swanson.

Panic! at the Disco, a new band that has befriended that of Fall Out Boy, has tore up mainstream pop/punk with it's single, "I Write Sins Not Tragedies." They have even gone so far as to perform with circus acts on stage, touring in Rock'n'Roll'n'Circus. They are proving that they are individualists at heart, despite their sounding a lot like their friends, Fall Out Boy.

Along with the pop/punk genre, is My Chemical Romance, with their new album entitled, *The Black Parade*. Their key song, "Welcome to the Black Parade," scored number one on Billboard's Hot Modern Rock Tracks. Many girls in the dorms can be heard blasting it to their hearts content. It's extremely catching and has a Queen-style feel to it.

photograph from myspace.com website

Mainstream pop/punk band, Panic! at the Disco, tears up the charts with their single, "I Write Sins not Tragedies."

Needless to say, the music for this year is sure to be great. Bands like The Red Hot Chili Peppers are making it huge with their new flowing music. They've gone through a lot of styles in the past, and now they're getting a very good audience reaction from their latest album, *Stadium Arcadium*. They're now on tour for the album, promoting across the country. They're even stopping by Orlando and Tampa for a concert this month. The band is drawing more fans to them than ever, with their single, "Snow (Hey Oh)," hitting a number one spot for this year's Hot Modern Rock Tracks on Billboard. They're on their third single from the album now, each one hitting a number one spot, before being replaced by its counterpart.

"The music industry is always rising...and now with iPods making music such an accessible product, it'll only continue to build momentum," explained junior Ruth Chappell.

With help from iTunes and other online implements, music bands that otherwise wouldn't be heard get the publicity and media they need to make it big. It's only a matter of time before other bands, like Motion City Soundtrack, Plain White T's, Head Automatica, Hellogoodbye, and Cute Is What We Aim For, become widespread

MTV locks up audience

BY EVELINA VIIRI
Lions' Pride Staff Writer

MTV hits viewers hard with a wide variety of new shows for the spring season, which are sure to captivate any viewer's eye as they channel surfing. One of the newest reality dramas aired last week for the first time. *Juvies* takes audiences inside the world of what it's like to be in a juvenile detention center. Filmed at the Lake County Juvenile Center in Indiana, this reality series follows first-time offenders under 18 as they experience what life is like in lockdown, and how it feels to face the judge.

Each inmate goes through the entire process of intake up until his or her hearing. The cases, the people, and the decisions are real, and most important they can make the difference in each teen's life. Their only way home is to show some remorse and determination to change who they are and where they are going. Some of the crimes recognized in the first couple episodes are grand theft auto, running away, and drug activity.

For example, 16-year-old Sarah took off with friends to Texas on an impulsive attempt to "start a better life." But when she was arrested for running away, she found out her mother didn't want her back. Regardless of how hard these inmates may think they are, their true selves comes out when they realize this may be their new home, and they have no one to blame but themselves.

Each inmate fears meeting with Superior Court Judge Mary Beth Bonaventura, a stern but fair, middle-aged woman who holds their immediate futures in her hands. She listens to the inmate's story, talks to the parents, and renders her decision.

The whole process is rather uneventful, and the other inmates are rarely as scary as feared. The staff is relatively compassionate, and the judge isn't unreasonable, but the little details are what make an impression on the new kids, and on viewers. The inmate's adaptation to this very authoritative environment almost seems to make these offenders grow up faster than they were expecting.

At first glance, this series seems like a more boring version of *True Life* or a poor adaptation of A&E's *Intervention*; however, the emotions shared between parents and inmates, between the inmates, and between the inmates and the judge complete the story and make viewers feel happy they aren't caught in a situation. Who knows? Maybe some viewers are caught down memory lane happy to be out of that situation?

While some might see this a just another reality show about kids screwing up, it might be one of the few that make its teen audience think twice about making choices that could potentially make them a part of the next episode.

Laguna Beach gets worked by critic waves

BY CAITLIN CRAFT
Lions' Pride Staff Writer

MTV.com

It's a fever beach showdown. The contestants are *Laguna Beach* preps against the *Maui Fever* party animals. Each team will take part in the following events: which couple can break up the most; which girl can create more self-centered drama; which person can drink the most, say the worst things, and get in the most trouble the next day; and which team can produce the best looking guy. The heat is on to see which hot spot reality drama, created by the same production company, can manage to capture audiences.

The producers of *Laguna Beach* launched their spring substitute for *Laguna Beach,* called *Maui Fever*. Their next project is Not Another Teen Reality Show, or at least that is what normally comes next in the sequence. *Maui Fever* chronicles the lives of real twenty-something friends who live and work on the titular Hawaiian island. With its focus on the ordinary sex, parties, and interpersonal drama, the show is a grown-up version of its California counterpart; however, it's not bringing much that Laguna lovers haven't already seen.

Maui Fever features a bunch of hot-bodied beach rats who hook up, break up, surf, and party. And that's about it. The guys spend their time as surf instructors, waiters, or resort-industry lackeys. Their goal is to scope out vacationing "hotties" and invite them to their raging house parties, and hopefully by the end of the night have sex and take pleasure in waving good-bye as the women catch their flights back home. The female cast members, meanwhile, have basically the same intentions, though they tend to focus their emotional games on the guys within their small group (rather than island visitors). For example, one scheming female, Chante, who might remind viewers of another drama queen looking for all the attention, strings along her ex, refusing his requests to get back together but blocking his attempts to move on. Does this sound familiar?

This eight-episode MTV series is shown on Wednesday nights at 10:30 p.m. following *Real World*. A little tip of advice for Wednesday night viewers, a movie might be in order after *Real World*, unless the fury of Chante's dramatic life, the sleezy ways of those Maui boys, and the intoxication of twenty-something-year-olds is what really grabs attention these days. It certainly doesn't make this generation look any better than what is shown. At least Laguna cuts back on the party scene, and the guys are better looking.

Keys unlocks doors to future education

BY CAITLIN CRAFT
Lions' Pride Staff Writer

Singer/song writer Alicia Keys is giving students a shot at a higher education through her foundation. Keys has established the Open Doors Scholarship Program in order to give children in inner-city schools the financial opportunity to attend college and provide four students in four cities with that much more money to help get them through a four year college.

"We're just looking for standout students who are definitely college-bound and need a little bit of help financially to really achieve their dreams," Keys told the *St. Petersburg Times*.

Each student who earns the scholarship will be offered $5,000. These standout students will be selected from Jacksonville, FL; New Orleans, LA; Atlanta, GA; and New York City's Harlem. However, these students will do their part in giving back to the community just as the foundation is doing for them. Each student will represent the organization at school functions and perform community service each semester. Despite these requirements the effort is worth the reward.

"I like to find organizations that focus on motivating and telling people that you can do it, no matter what your situation. There are so many people out there telling you what you can't do and shouldn't do and what you'll never be able to do as opposed to everything that you can do," said Keys in an interview with the *St.Petersburg Times*. She also focuses her time on two other organizations to better shape the community, Keep A Child Alive and Teens in Motion.

The support for the scholarship is provided by a Jacksonville-based nonprofit organization called Frum Tha Ground Up. The group was organized by Keys' road manager, D.J. Walton, who completed his higher education in Jacksonville.

Super Bowl commercials mixed bag of humor

BY EVELINA VIIRI
Lions' Pride Staff Writer

Along with the trademark Clydesdales, talking animals, and high-end computer graphics, a real mix existed in this year's showdown of advertisers in the Super Bowl.

One of the ads that caught most attention in this year's Super Bowl was the ad showing a number of men stripping off their shirts – and some other articles of clothing – at the sight of a new Chevy HHR rolling down the street. The ad was true to the tradition of using oddball humor in Super Bowl ads and gave many people a good laugh.

Another ad this year that received attention was Snickers commercial of two men kissing each other as a result of eating on the same snicker bar. The commercial reminded the audience of one of the scenes from Walt Disney's *Lady and the Tramp*. The ad met a lot of opposition from Gay Rights Organizations, with the opinion that the ad offends the Gay Community, and was after Super Bowl banned. Jennifer O'Connor, junior at Saint Leo University, says that the Snicker commercial was the best commercial in this year's Super Bowl and that it is too bad they can no longer show it on television.

FedEx combined their ad with another trademark of big-ticket Super Bowl spots, fancy computer graphics, with an otherworldly ad showing an office worker drifting off into space from the world's first office on the moon, only to be clobbered by a passing meteor.

Coca-Cola was back in the game after a long absence, taking on its rival Pepsi with a number of creative ads, including respect to Black History Month with an understated ad showing the changing shapes of Coke bottles over time as milestones in black history appeared alongside. Other ads also mentioned Black History Month and highlighted the fact that, for the first time in Super Bowl history, the head coaches of both teams were black.

Bud Light showed early in the game a rather unusual tactic for winning at rock-paper-scissors – throwing an actual rock at the head of your opponent. The joke was not completely new, however, since last year Sprint Nextel featured a phone with "crime prevention," which turned out to be throwing the phone at someone's head.

Some of the uses of humor did not resonate well with experts. Stephen Greyser, a professor at Harvard Business School specializing in communications and the business of sports, said the rock-throwing spot by Anheuser-Busch was "attention-getting" but also "had a nasty character to it."

The job-search company, Career Builder, ditched its longtime office-monkey pitchmen of years past in favor of a jungle combat scene among office workers, where office supplies become weapons. Think of "Dilbert" meets *Lord of the Flies*.

An ad early in the game for Blockbuster, with computer animation of animals trying to push, click, and drag an actual mouse, was creative but delivered the company's message. However, King Pharmaceutical's ad with a guy dressed up in a giant red heart costume and Garmin International's ad of a superhero-like character fighting a monster made from maps was somewhat hard to follow.

A lot was riding on the ads, and not just because CBS charged as much as $2.6 million for a 30-second spot during the game. With an estimated 90 million people watching, the Super Bowl is the most widely viewed program all year, and the ads are subject to intense analysis. After watching hours of football with commercial breaks, this year's Super Bowl was without a doubt a mixed bag of humor.

Sports

SLU cheeleading squad wins Florida State Championship

BY NIKII BROWN
Lions' Pride Assistant Editor

photographs by Josh Wethington

Saint Leo cheerleading squad took home first place trophy.

Student organizations at Saint Leo University have to prove themselves to the community, other student organizations, and themselves to gain respect. This has been exceptionally difficult for the Saint Leo cheerleading squad - until now.

In 2003, the squad was restarted with 11 freshmen and 1 sophomore. That year the squad was led by three freshmen captains, who took on coaching responsibilities as well. Halfway through the year two of the cheer moms volunteered to pick up the coaching. They finished that year with 7 members with hopes to keep those members and pick-up more.

From that squad, only two members remain, and the coaches have changed just about every year. The squad is continuously rebuilding as coaches leave and cheerleaders transfer to different schools.

The squad has battled negative comments from their peers every year, and has strived to prove that SLU cheerleaders have the skills to make the school proud.

Without a football team, the cheerleaders only have one season to perform. This year, the squad pushed forward to attend their first competition as a collegiate squad. Much like the establishment of their foundation, getting to competition has been a rocky road.

"When I came to Leo four years ago I joined a squad that was just about nonexistent. Nikii and I decided that we were going to make it a goal to compete before we graduated. Now that the time is almost here it seems unreal, and I am so proud of everything the team has become and the progress that the program has made. I can't wait to see what the future holds for Saint Leo cheerleading," Senior Erica Gardner said.

The coach has been out for most of the pre-season and current season due to her pregnancy, so the squad has had to step up and take control to get to where they want to be. They found and hired a choreographer to help them put together a competition routine and make their competition music, and they paid for most of the fee out of pocket.

Feeling like they had things under control, the squad set up a long practice before winter break to learn the first half of the routine. However, other athletes practicing in the gym did not appreciate the noise from the squad's practice, and their coach yelled at the squad and the choreographer.

The squad decided to take a break and return once the other team had left the gym. This was not the first time the squad had been yelled at by that coach, and it was apparent the two teams had a conflict that needed to be fixed.

"I think it's completely ridiculous at how badly we're treated by the athletics department here at Saint Leo University," sophomore Chad Kinney said. "They put us under athletics, yet they treat us as if we're just another club and not a sport. It's time people realize what we do isn't something to mock or label as unimportant."

The squad took their next practice outside to the recreation field, but some members felt unsafe teaching new stunts outside on the grass. After a bad fall last year, the squad was given $5000 for mats, which provided much needed safety; however, the mats are too big and heavy to move outside. They decided to try to practice without cheering.

Even though the cheerleaders reserve practice space, they are not allowed to do basic things like clap or play their music. The choreographer was told by an athletic administrator that the squad was not at a competition level. With all of this going on, the cheerleaders needed to show that they had been working hard for something.

The first semester basketball games were played without cheerleaders on the sidelines. The squad was missing uniforms, shoes, poms, and they did not perform until the first home game after break.

Even upon the return to the basketball home games, the cheerleaders were missing at the women's basketball games.

"As a squad, we feel that the women's basketball players have absolutely no respect for us whatsoever," Kinney said. "They snicker at us in the back of class rooms, mock us during their own practices, and simply treat us like we're beneath them. As a result, our desire to cheer for them has been completely obliterated. Who wants to cheer for a team that doesn't support you as fellow athletes, and degrades you every chance they get?"

To become a sport, the cheerleaders have to cheer at all the women's games. Despite their feelings, they started attending the games on January 24. On top of cheering every women's game, they must also cheer every men's game and compete 50 percent of the time to get the recognition as a sport according to NCAA rules. That is three times the work, and the women's and men's games are back to back.

"I demand that we get the respect we deserve and that we be treated as equals to other sports," Kinney said. "I'm tired of excuses that we haven't earned our spot as a competitive sport. We've been working hard all year, and it's not our fault athletics is blind to that fact."

The cheerleaders are there to support the athletic teams and to boost school spirit. Just as any other team, they need supporters as well. The team pushed to attend the Florida State Fair competition on February 10 and is selling t-shirts to pay for their competition fees.

Although the cheerleaders are trying to keep the spirit alive, it is not an easy. Some members feel they don't have the support of other athletic teams or the school.

"Just like every other sport on campus, we are a team of extremely talented athletes with a purpose; we want to succeed in our sport and represent Saint Leo to the best of our ability," Kinney Said. "However, with the way that we're being treated, my desire to support Saint Leo and the rest of athletics is running thin."

Not only do the cheerleaders feel they receive little respect, but the male cheerleaders feel like they get even less.

"I use to laugh at guys who did this. I was a football player and a wrestler, and now I'm a cheerleader," junior Billy Cullen said. "This is hard, competitive. [It's] one of the hardest things I've ever done."

They lost members of the squad while trying to get through the competition routine and had to rearrange it. There are no subs for cheerleading, and the changes that had to be made three weeks before competition were ones they were praying would work. With the coach on maternity leave, and injuries occurring back to back, the squad was fighting hard to meet their goal.

In their last week before competition, things started to look up. The coach heard about the team's struggles and got the squad in gear for competition. She made much needed four-hour practices into incredibly productive two-hour practices.

On Saturday, those hours paid off. The cheerleaders hit the stage with full force and showed their home crowd what they have been fighting for all year. Despite stitches, black eyes, sprained ankles and wrists, the squad hit the mats and followed through with the routine they had started not more than two months ago.

Supporters were amazed by what the squad pulled through with and asked to see more of it at the basketball games.

"When I stepped out on that mat tonight and saw the large group of friends and family members there dressed in green and gold, cheering for US, it made everything we've been through in the past four years worthwhile," Gardner said. "All the blood, sweat, stress, and tears, the hours and hours of practice, the countless bruises, the disrespect, all of it...just disappeared. We did it, and no one can take that away from us."

By the end of Saturday night, Saint Leo University's cheer squad finished in first place and brought home a more than five foot trophy and gold medals.

"I am very excited to be apart of a team that works so hard for what so little they have," senior Eric Schulman said.

Baseball is in the air

BY JOSEPH GENTILE
Lions' Pride Staff Writer

Its 9 p.m. at night, you're outside freezing, your body aches from sitting in the same uncomfortable seat for hours, but for some reason you don't leave. Baseball season is starting.

The beginning of the season is a nervous time for baseball fans. They wonder what will happen with their team. Will they be good or bad? Will they all return to the team healthy and ready to play or will a player be injured?

Coach Ricky Ware knows exactly what he is starting the season with.

"Every player is coming back healthy and ready to play," he said. "The starting lineup and rotation is set; we're ready to go out there and play. They're all real good kids, and everybody is itching to get the season started."

The preseason poll has them ranked as sixth overall in the Sunshine State Conference, but they are hoping to change people's minds. Last year in the preseason pole, they were ranked in the bottom half of the division and that proved more than enough motivation to make the team work hard and show they were better then that. At the end of the season, they were in the top half of the conference and only fell a few wins short of making a playoff push ending the season at 32 and 23. That was Saint Leo's first winning season under Ware.

"Because of what we accomplished last year, we want to do better this year. Our team was heavily underestimated last year, and we ended up surprising everybody. We came so close only to fall short by a few games. This year, we're expecting to do better and make the playoffs," Ware said.

Ware knows what he is talking about when it comes to winning. One look down at his hand shows his New York Yankees championship ring. He worked within the Yankee organization for 5 seasons. He started in the player development and scouting department for the organization. Later, he became the hitting and fielding instructor with the Gulf Coast Yankees in the Rookie League for two years, and after that he helped coach the Tampa Yankees of the Class A Florida State League. That is one hell of an impressive resume.

"Everything I learned while in the Yankee organization I brought with me to Saint Leo," Ware said.

Everything seems to be on track for an impressive season this year. The team is healthy, ready to play, and welcoming on all challenges.

Coach Ware wants to organize a baseball booster club. The group is called The Rightfield Rallies. He will provide t-shirts for the people who sign up and will have hotdogs and hamburgers for them at the end of the season to say thanks for being a part of it. Anyone interested should contact Coach Ware at ricky.ware@saintleo.edu or e-mail Sean Reaves at sean.reaves@saintleo.edu.